

Marriages of the Russian Peasantry.

matter-of-fact in their conceptions and habits, and are not at all prone to indulge in sublime, ethereal sentiments of any kind. They have little or nothing of what may be roughly termed the Herakleitean or Platonic element in their composition, and consequently they know very little about those sentimental, romantic ideas which we habitually associate with the preliminary steps to matrimony. This fact is so patent to all who have studied the Russian peasantry, that even those who have endeavored to idealize peasant life have rarely ventured to make their story turn on a sentimental love affair. In the primitive system of agriculture usually practiced in the interior of the Russian west—if it be allowed to use such a term—it comprises a man, a woman and a horse. As soon, therefore, as a boy becomes an able-bodied laborer he ought to be pro-

for the completion of the labor-unit. To procure a horse, either by purchase or by rearing a foal, is the duty of the head of the house; to procure a wife for the youth is the duty of "the female Big

sideration in determining the choice is in both cases the same. Prudent domestic administrators are not to be tempted by

they seek is not beauty, but physical strength and capacity for work. When the youth reaches the age of eighteen he

once, and as soon as he gives his consent negotiations are opened with the parents of some eligible young person. In the

times facilitated by certain old women called *svakhi*, who occupy themselves specially with this kind of mediation ;

directly by, or through the agency of, some common friend of the two houses. Care must of course be taken that there

these obstacles are not always easily avoided in a small village, the inhabitants of which have been long in the

Russian ecclesiastical law, not only is marriage between first cousins illegal, but affinity is considered as equivalent

in-law and a sister-in-law are regarded as mother and a sister—and even the fictitious relationship created by stand-

godfather and godmother is legally recognized. If all the preliminary negotiations are successful, the marriage

his bride home to the house of which he is a member. She brings nothing with her as a dowry except her trousseau, but she brings a pair of good strong arms.

and thereby enriches her adopted family. Of course, it happens occasionally—for human nature is everywhere essentially the same—that a young peasant falls in

love with one of his former playmates, and brings his little romance to a happy conclusion at the altar; but such cases are very rare and as a rule it may be

said that the marriages of the Russian peasantry are arranged under the influence of economic rather than sentimental considerations.—*D. Mackenzie*

Wallace.

King Alfonso, who recently made the tour of Spain, on his arrival at Seville, signified his desire to conform with the

ings to wash the feet of twelve aged
paupers, and then to attend on them at
a sumptuous table laid out at the expense

correspondent writes: "About 200 persons alone had been invited to witness this scene in the Hall of the Ambassa-

beautiful, and its patio and principal courts have been restored in the style originally designed from the Arabic

movements, and the light, airy architecture, carry you back to the days of the old conquerors of Andalusia, though

every part of the structure. In the Hall of the Ambassadors a high table had been raised for the old men, and facing

the infantas. They soon appeared, dressed in pale blue silk, with long white lace mantillas. The crowd pressed forward

of the servants of the royal household. In that Moorish court were assembled the *elite* of Sevillian society, and at least

Madrid. The ladies all wore the black and white mantilla, and uniforms were not scarce. When the king appeared, sur-

double was to get a glimpse over the
occupants of the front rank. By

er, and witnessed the king's part in the ceremony. After a short prayer by the archbishop, clad in fine vestments of black and gold, with his assistants

ent through the operation of washing
the feet of the poor, who were led to the
table by the chamberlains and equerries.
The King Alfonso, the dishes

len with meat, bread, and fruit, which
e young monarch set before his aged
bjects with a good humored smile.
veral times, indeed, his majesty laugh-

outright when an awkward chamber-
n nearly upset a plate or dish, at the
minent risk of spoiling gilt cloak and
lliant uniform. During the whole

the band played selections from "Ave Maria" of Gounod, and other sacred music. When King Alfonso, surrounded by his grandees and officers,

escorted by the hatter, crossed the courtyard to repose before the provision hour came on, he appeared rather "tired."
